

Dear Members of the Committee,

I'm writing you to ask that you support HB 5916-5917. This legislation will raise the bar on pet stores and breeders in the state while ensuring that reputable stores and breeders can continue to contribute to the communities they operate in.

My husband and I have always loved our pets and are diligent when choosing a dog or cat that is the right fit for our family. A large part of this process is having choices and being able to research temperament and breed as well as age when choosing if our home will be a happy and healthy one for our new family member.

We support those that decide to acquire their animals through private sources or shelters, and have in fact done so ourselves with our other dogs and cats. But our latest pet was acquired from The Family Puppy in Novi. We often stopped by The Family Puppy while waiting to eat at a nearby restaurant. We were always impressed with the cleanliness of the facility, the selection of puppies, and the knowledgeable and friendly staff. One such visit, we were drawn to a Golden who latched eyes with me and immediately there was a bonding. Really. After one more visit we knew we had to bring her home.

Rosie, our Golden Retriever, has been a blessing and we loved having her immediately. Like most Goldens, she is very active. But she also tested her boundaries with persistence. John, the owner of The Family Puppy, gave us a weekend break and put us in touch with an experienced trainer. In any dog training, both the puppy and the owner learn how to communicate. She became an obedient (happily obedient) dog when we engaged her with the correct cues and rewards. Without the resources of The Family Puppy, we would have been at a loss as to how to shape her behavior. Their resources and customer service were a life saver – maybe I should say dog-saver.

That is why these brick and mortar stores like the Family Puppy are so important. If they weren't there what would we have done? Then our choices in pets will be from unregulated and unsupervised private breeders or shelters where the pedigree and temperament will be "who knows what." A dog could look like a golden retriever but have strains of more aggressive dogs or more excitable dogs without the owner having the slightest idea. With access to a fine pet shop like The Family Puppy, we know we have experienced and knowledgeable owners who oversee the breeders they use, and we can be confident that the puppy we get is the puppy we expect. Additionally, with The Family Puppy, we get a certified healthy dog, a free initial vet visit, and tons of support in how to nurture and train the new puppy. We also get a warranty! This is huge. This is one of the many important reasons I am testifying on behalf of HB 5916 and 5917. I am confident that I speak for many. Thank you for your consideration.

Please do not listen to a few extreme voices (who loudly scream unfair stereotypes) and take away the source of reliable breeding of dogs by outlawing pet stores. Let's pass legislation that protects Michigan pet owners from only being able to procure dogs from unknown origins, or worse, not at all. I heartily support legislation that holds breeders and pet stores accountable for good breeding and good care of the dogs they provide for sale.

Nancy White